

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GENEVA 07401 221726Z

42

ACTION DHA-02

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2484

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FOR D/HA

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: UNHCR

SUBJECT: UNHCR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AGENDA, ITEM 3: BOAT CASES

REF: GENEVA 7355

1. WE ANTICIPATE THAT UNDER AGENDA ITEM 3, THE HIGH COMMISSIONER WILL REFER TO THE BOAT CASES IN MUCH THE SAME VEIN AS THAT SUBJECT IS PRESENTED IN PARAGRAPH 24 OF DOCUMENT A/AC.96/529. THE ENSUING GENERAL DEBATE WILL PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY TO HIGHLIGHT THE BOAT CASES AND TO STIMULATE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THE PROBLEM THROUGH UNHCR, THE UNIQUELY RESPONSIBLE U.N. ORGANIZATION.

2. WHILE AN OBVIOUS APPROACH WOULD BE TO LEVEL CRITICISM AT THOSE NATIONS SUCH AS SINGAPORE AND INDONESIA, WHOSE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE REFUGEES HAS BEEN CONSISTENTLY IN-HUMANE, A BETTER TACTIC MIGHT BE TO PROPOSE THAT THE HIGH COMMISSIONER, OR PERHAPS THROUGH HIM THE SECRETARY GENERAL, PUBLICLY COMMEND THOSE NATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE DISTINGUISHED THEMSELVES BY THEIR HUMANITARIAN EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF THESE UNFORTUNATE PEOPLE. IT MIGHT THUS BE URGED THAT NATIONS OF FIRST SETTLEMENT

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PAGE 02 GENEVA 07401 221726Z

WHICH HAVE BEEN GENEROUS AND HOSPITABLE IN THEIR

RECEPTION OF REFUGEES, SUCH AS THAILAND, JAPAN, HONG KONG, THE PHILIPPINES AND POSSIBLY MALAYSIA, BE CITED BY THE HIGH COMMISSIONER (OR SYG) FOR THIS HUMANE ACTIVITY IN CONFORMITY WITH THE HIGH GOALS AND PRINCIPLES UPON WHICH THE UNHCR (OR THE U.N.) WAS FOUNDED. SIMILARLY, THE MASTERS AND OWNERS OF VESSELS, WHICH HAVE SAVED AND CARED FOR REFUGEES ADRIFT ON THE HIGH SEAS, SUCH AS THE CAPE ERIMO AND LADY CYNTHIA, SHOULD BE ACCORDED PUBLIC RECOGNITION FOR THEIR SELFLESS AND HUMANITARIAN CONDUCT. FINALLY, THOSE NATIONS OF ULTIMATE RESETTLEMENT THAT HAVE RESPONDED FAVORABLY TO THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S APPEAL, EITHER FORMALLY OR BY THEIR ACTIONS, SUCH AS BELGIUM, FRANCE, CANADA, AUSTRALIA, GERMANY, WOULD ALSO HAVE THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS ACKNOWLEDGED.

3. SUCH AN APPROACH WOULD, WE FEEL, BE MORE PLATABLE TO UNHCR, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME ENCOURAGING OTHERS TO FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF THOSE COMMENDED FOR THEIR HUMANITARIAN ACTIONS. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE OMISSION FROM FAVORABLE MENTION OF OTHER SEACOAST NATIONS IN THE AREA SHOULD HAVE A POSITIVE AND SALUTARY EFFECT.

4. WE SHOULD CONSIDER WHETHER SUCH A PROPOSAL SHOULD BE INITIATED BY SOME PARTY OTHER THAN THE UNITED STATES. ALTHOUGH NO DELEGATIONS HERE HAVE BEEN SOUNDED OUT ON THE SUBJECT, WE THINK IT LIKELY THAT A SUITABLE SPOKESMAN COULD BE FOUND AMONG THOSE NATIONS TRADITIONALLY SUPPORTING SUCH PRINCIPLES. IN ITS INTERVENTION, THE US DELEGATION COULD THEN STRONGLY ENDORSE THIS INITIATIVE. CATTO

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